

**BACKGROUND:** This initial report summarizes the conclusions of Recon Team SD-R-3 following 2 weeks of observation and investigation of the NC homestead identified as "Hopper's Farm" (or HF).

#### COMMUNITY/AREA DETAILS

1. **Physical Description:** The first impression is "fortification". . A circular earthwork/trench system encloses an area of about 6 hectares, 330 metres in diameter. The system consists of a substantial outer ditch, about 6 metres wide and 5 metres deep with an inner rampart of rubble(?) and soil. This earthwork ring is broken by a major entranceway to the east,

The rampart is 10 metres wide and 3 metres high. This is topped by three, equally spaced, firing positions; each position is equipped with at least one belt-fed LMG (apparently a Browning M1919 or variant). One of these firing positions is immediately adjacent to the main entrance. Note: This position also appears to be equipped with some form of "hand-cranked" Gatling gun (caliber estimated at 30mm to 40mm). There is no cover within 600 meters – just open fields with barbed-wire fences. Also note: every firing position allows the weapons to be rotated 360 degrees.

Within the perimeter are 22 "buildings": a farmhouse (2 floors), a barn, a blacksmith/stables (5 horses, 2 mules) a grain silo and 18 single-storey log cabins (each approximately 6 meters long)

2. **History:** As far as can be established, the foundations for present-day Hopper's Farm (and indeed the New Confederacy) were set up immediately after the Disaster. Surviving government organizations designated several hundred farms as relocation points for families of 'Displaced Persons' and the farm owners were deputised as operators of a workfare scheme, under a policy known as "work to eat". Unfortunately, these government agencies did not survive the first winter and subsequent anarchy. Their power, personnel and equipment were absorbed by the only people who were able to provide defensible positions and knew how to produce food: agricultural landowners.

The "Displaced Persons" (now known as "DEEPEES") rapidly lost all political power. They were not permitted to own weapons and had two choices: stay and obey the farmer – or be expelled and die. Unconfirmed reports suggest that there rebellions did occur - but these were suppressed by the landowners. The current status of the DP descendants is roughly equivalent to that of a Russian serf – they belong to the land - and the land belongs to a specific family (the position of Workfare Administrator is more-or-less hereditary). They have little in the way of rights and could be accurately described as slaves

There does appear to be some form of middle class in the New Confederacy: "Citizens". Deepees can obtain citizenship after long and meritorious service – but this is at the decision of "their" landowner. The children of citizens are "provisional" citizens – but can lose this status if they do not obtain the equivalent of a High School education and subsequently enter some respected trade/profession (the military or police is a common choice)

3. **Population:** Approximately 150 people live on Hopper's Farm – there are 18 families of "Deepees", the extended Hopper family and 6 'citizens' (the foreman and his family), The Hopper family are caucasoid but the other inhabitants vary in ethnicity – the citizens are negroid

4. **Communication:** Shortwave voice communication was frequently detected (other parties were other homesteads and a nearby town). There are entertainment/instructional broadcasts from other parts of the NC and the Deepees are permitted to listen to a radio receiver in the barn – but only on Saturday night and Sundays.

Mail is received and collected once per week. The mail service uses a vehicle that appears to be a wood-burning jeep (either steam powered or gasification?). The Hopper family also operate such a vehicle. No other self-powered vehicles were observed, all other travel was on foot, or on horse/mule.

5. **Economic Situation:** The Deepees receive only food and accommodation in exchange for their labor but they do receive a 40% share when the Hoppers sell produce from the Deepee gardens (each cabin has a 6 by 3 meter garden). The produce is taken to local market once per month by cart and a small group of Deepees (selected by the foreman) is permitted to go with the cart – and buy various things for their friends and family. This trip to the market is usually regarded as a form of reward for hard work.

Hopper's Farm is currently self-sufficient in food (maize, potatoes, wheat, sheep and pigs) but, in interviews, older Deepees stated that this was not always the case – and that some past winters had been particularly hard. During a “hard winter”, it was not unknown for “bad administrators” to expel those Deepees that they could not feed – leaving these people with no alternative but to attempt to take another community's food supply.

6. **Religion:** The Hoppers encourage an evangelical “born again” style of Christianity. Attendance at (open-air) services is mandatory each Sunday - unless the weather is particularly bad. Note: other religions are tolerated – provided they are practised in private
7. **Education:** Literacy is estimated at about 20%, although this may improve - the foreman's wife is credited with opening a small school for children under 10.
8. **Political/Voluntary Organisations:** None observed
9. **Health and Health Care:** Rudimentary. Observation and interview suggested that there is a respected midwife. Sewage system is non-existent (human waste is used as fertilizer). However, all members of the community are aware of the need for hygiene and all water is boiled before use. Soap is manufactured on-site.
10. **Law/Order:** All power rests with the Hopper family and the foreman. Presumably, the foreman's decisions can theoretically be appealed to the Hoppers – but apparently this has never been done.